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ABSTRACT

A wide variety of fundraising options is available to public schools. Such traditional school fundraising events as sales of student pictures, bake sales, carnivals, plays, magazine sales, concessions, and fruit sales can raise significant amounts if handled properly. Corporations, foundations, and charitable trusts provide a very small share of the support offered to elementary and secondary education, but developing contacts with such agencies can be beneficial to schools in other ways as well. Partnerships between schools and businesses go beyond the receiving and granting of money and goods to include such programs as "Adopt-A-School," lobbying groups, and teacher recognition programs. Building these partnerships may prove difficult and may require getting past years of mistrust, but can help add real-world relevance to educational activities. Communities can establish their own educational foundations to provide tax incentives to those donating funds that will be turned over to the schools. School districts can raise funds through careful management of unused property. Some districts allow donors to select the gift they will give from a special "wishbook." This report reviews these options, citing fundraising efforts by California schools, and concludes with a summary of the common features and potential drawbacks of fundraising programs. (PGD)

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# PRIVATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION, K-12

by

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June 1985

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This report is a review of the literature on a current educational topic. It is intended to be an unbaised summary and does not necessarily reflect the positions or opinions of the San Mateo County Office of Education or its staff.

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The myriad Carnegie Libraries in small towns everywhere illustrate the long history of private giving to public institutions in America. But the level of competition for private funding is new, as public institutions face the loss of their tax-based support.

In the 1970s, California's public schools were hit with (1) the Serrano v. Priest decision mandating equality in general fund expenditure between rich and poor school districts; (2) lower funding due to declining enrollment; (3) inflation; (4) recession; (5) federal budget cuts; and (6) Proposition 13 which drastically curtailed local property tax use and shifted the bulk of school funding to the state level. In the 1982-83 school year, for example, the $12.3 billion spent on K-12 education in California was 7 percent federal monies, 64 percent state, 20 percent local, and 9 percent miscellaneous.[1]

The curtailed and often chaotic condition of public funding has forced many schools to choose between cutting programs, services, and people or finding new money to support them. That new money is coming in many cases from private sources. State money is still tight and often carries restrictions. Proposition 13 severely inhibits schools from raising money through local taxes, so some schools appeal for that local money through a fundraising drive. The state regulates schools' use of some income, for example, revenue from surplus property. Moves have been made to equalize categorical as well as general funding across districts in the name of Serrano.[2] In 1984, the California Supreme Court prohibited schools from levying fees for extra curricular activities.[3]

Recent state finance reforms may not do too much to change these trends inhibiting local schools. One author calls SB 813 ". . . a small ray of sunshine in an otherwise gloomy picture."[4] Some of the money it

gives the schools is already earmarked, as for mentor teachers. In the 1984 election, Californians established a state lottery specifically to raise money for the schools, but we can only speculate on its impact since the lottery is not yet operational.

To meet urgent needs to save, restore, and/or redesign local programs, schools are looking for money from parents, the community, business, and the philanthropic community. A 1982 survey by the accounting firm of Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Company, shows a strong rise in fundraising activity in California school districts, concluding that "While the results to date have been modest in terms of dollars raised, there is clearly a significant untapped potential."[5] Sixty-one percent of their survey respondents had or were planning fundraising programs. In 1981-82, 66 districts raised $2,654,000, up from $480,000 in 1978-79.[6]

This paper will discuss some fundraising options schools are using, from time-honored fundraising events (carnivals, PTA bake sales) and grant seeking through new twists on these traditional activities (school/business partnerships, Adopt-A-School, foundations, aggressive property management). It will conclude with one new marketing idea, the "gifts catalog" or "wishbook."

## Traditional School Fundraising Events

The school carnival and the PTA bake sale are probably universal. A 1984 survey of Tennessee principals indicates that 90 percent of them conducted some fundraising that year. The most popular activities were (in descending order): student picture sales; cake/cookie sales; carnivals, festivals, plays; magazine sales; concessions; and fruit sales. The academic program received more of the profits (65 percent to 35 percent) than did the extracurricular program.[7]

We may think of magazine and cookie sales as financial "small potatoes," but they can raise healthy amounts of money. The Tennessee principals reported annual revenue totals of $5,000-$100,000 with an average of $25,000 per school.[8] A parent/faculty amateur night, called the Chicken's Ball, raised $42,000 for the San Carlos, California, schools in 1984, while the San Francisco Education Foundation's holiday luncheon netted $52,000.[9] John A. Rowland High School, near Pomona, California, has raised $300,000 toward a $1 million stadium, mainly with bingo.[10] Starting from a rummage sale 30 years ago, a North Carolina PTA now owns two thrift shops and real estate that contributed $250,000 to the schools in 1984.[11]

But, of course, not every event raises this kind of money. Some fail dismally. A rain shower or unmailed publicity flyers can mean zero profits from all the money and work spent on planning the event.[12] But well-planned and well-publicized events can produce good income and pleasure for the participants. Some, like the Chicken's Ball, may become cherished annual events for the whole community.

A plus, in some cases, is that students may be directly involved, working for their school and generating school spirit. But student involvement also has its drawbacks. Of the Tennessee principals surveyed, 45 percent felt that fundraising activities interfered with the instructional program (40 percent did not, 15 percent were undecided). Twenty-nine percent reported that those activities took place during the school day. Sixty-seven percent said their activities involved sending students to make door-to-door sales.[13] Clearly, to benefit all concerned, the who, what, where, and why of fundraising must be carefully planned.

For Further Information:

Moorhead, Ron. "Fundraising: The All-Hands-Aboard Venture." THRUST for Educational Leadership, January 1984, pp. 15-16.

Paradiso, Jim, and Paradiso, Suzi. "Fundraising Fund-amentals." Instructor, September 1980, p.130.

## Grants and Corporate Giving

Through much of this century, public schools have ignored or feared business involvement,[14] but they are now seeking corporate as well as philanthropic financing and donations of goods. After a long hiatus, corporate giving is on the rise, but Dale Mann is quick to warn us not to expect too much. He points out that individuals do 80% of all philanthropic giving, with corporations and foundations each contributing only 5 percent of the total. Of the one billion corporate dollars given annually to education, only three to five percent go to K-12 schools, public or private. The most generous estimates of corporate contributions amount to less than one-half of one percent of the toal cost of K-12 public education. Mann asserts, ". . . schools are raising ten times as much through ticket sales and cake sales as they are through involvement with the private sector."[15]

Yet this still means $13-$22 million schools can get from business, and the like from foundations. The search and application procedure is well documented in many "grantsmanship" guidebooks. George Neill points out a frequently-overlooked source of money: charitable trusts handled by banks and law firms. Too small to be foundations, these trusts can be identified through the 990A tax return they must file. These returns and other excellent research material on grants will be found, Neill notes, in

foundation centers located in San Francisco, Cleveland, New York City, and Washington, D.C. He suggests this phone number for further information on money sources: (800) 424-9836.[16]

The donation process not only provides direct money for the schools, but far more importantly in Mann's view, it builds collaboration which leads to mutual understanding between business and the schools and hopefully to political assistance from business in the fight to gain truly adequate public financing for the schools.[17]

For Further Information:

Finn, Matia. Fundraising for Early Childhood Programs. Getting Started and Getting Results. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1982. ERIC Document ED 230 269.

## School/Business Partnerships

The idea of the school/business partnership takes the relationship beyond the granting and receiving of money and goods. Partnership, a broad term which encompasses the popular Adopt-A-School concept discussed below, usually does, but need not, involve material transactions. Human interactions, such as tutoring, mentoring, advising, or volunteering, are at the forefront in many programs.

These programs can take an infinite variety of forms. Mann's 1983-84 survey of partnership activity in 23 cities, including Los Angeles, found 16 Adopt-A-School programs, five special purpose partnerships, three lobbying groups, two foundations, and seven other unique programs, including a Teacher Recognition Program and vocational education activities.[18]

Mann found that school/business partnerships are usually the work of the school superintendent and other top school administrators who make personal contacts at civic organizations and make direct calls on

corporate executives. Approximately one-quarter of Mann's 23-city sample has solidified their partnership activities with a special office and some infrastructure. Three-quarters use the Adopt-A-School framework. One-half have comprehensive policy statements, to handle such questions as "Who pays for the maintenance of a capital gift?" or "When and how can an unwanted corporate gift be declined?"[19]

Mann also found a preference in school/business partnerships for short-term projects often targeted to specific schools. Such projects have clear, limited objectives, personal involvement, and visible results, but they also reach fewer students, bypass the schools' true instructional core, and keep the partnership relatively distant and restricted. This may be a "fragile base" from which to build a long term relationship. However, from such a base almost half the districts Mann studied reported that they developed their partnerships into big-ticket financing and political support from business for better school funding.[20]

School/business partnerships can raise the profile of both school and business and help them to understand each other. Partnerships can bring the "real world" into the school, perhaps increasing students' motivation and giving them a better understanding of the world of work. Businesses can also fall prey to isolation and can benefit from a dose of the "real world." And partnerships can re-acquaint educators with the majority of the community who do not have children in the public schools.[21]

Forming a partnership may not prove easy, however. After years of scant communication, educators may distrust business persons and business persons may resent educators who are "looking for handouts."[22] Some school personnel dislike going to business with a "tin cup" soliciting funds.[23]

In California, business/education partnerships are facilitated by the Industry Education Council of California (IECC, 1575 Old Bayshore Highway,

Suite 106, Burlingame, CA 94010). With its 27 affiliates statewide, the IECC is developing a wide variety of partnership models, with emphasis on replicable implementation and operational processes. Some of its partnership programs include a mobile computer van for Long Beach, a youth motivation task force in Ventura County, and a business mentor program in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.[24]

The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce Education Committee is working in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District. They have developed several projects in their "priority" areas: values education (In-School Scouting), excellence in school management (including a district self-insurance program), a study of teacher quality and availability, economic education (In-School Junior Achievement Programs), principal recognition, and Adopt-A-School.[25]

For Further Information

"Partnerships in Education." Journal of Educational Public Relations, September 1984, pp.15, 17-21.

## Adopt-A-School Programs

This is perhaps the best-known brand of school/business partnership and one that receives a fair degree of publicity. When President Reagan made 1984 the "Year of Partnerships in Education" to encourage private sector support, the message was highlighted by the White House "adopting" a Washington, D.C., elementary school. The Los Angeles Dodgers have also adopted an elementary school. Navy ships have adopted San Diego schools.[26] Indeed, almost anyone may "adopt" a school: large and small businesses, government agencies (including NASA), universities, professional societies, retired individuals, hospitals, charities, and community groups.[27]

Adoptive arrangements vary. In some cities the school seeks the business partner; in others, the business selects which school to adopt. The pairing may be brokered by a "matchmaking" community agency. Adoptive agreements require a strong commitment from all concerned. They result in jointly-developed programs, often with a basic skills component, that put an emphasis on people, rather than money.[28]

The Adopt-A-School model, like other partnerships, builds a sense of community spirit and links schools to the world of work. As some evidence of student motivation, it may be noted that Washington, D.C.'s most active "adopted" junior high school also had the city's best attendance during the first year of the project.[29]

Los Angeles has had an Adopt-A-School program since 1978. As of 1983, 425 of the district's 800 schools had been paired with adopters. Director Wayne Carlson reported that the pairings were one-to-one with adopters, for greater ownership. There have been practically no "dropouts" from the program, whose activities include tutoring, career days, and gifts of supplies.[30]

Practically all Memphis schools have been adopted, some by more than one partner. Houston's businesses adopt the district rather than individual schools, to create broader-based programs. New York City has created an "Alliance for the Public Schools" which has brought in large-scale programs such as a $430,000 principal staff development program funded by Chase Manhattan Bank.[31]

For Further Information

Hart, Elinor, Ed. Blueprint for Partnership: A Process Guide for Organizing Adopt-A-School Programs. Washington, D.C.: Prometheans, Inc., 1981. ERIC Document ED 204 428.

## The Educational Foundation

Widely discussed in education circles today, the foundation offers a method by which fundraising may be pursued--whether the money is actually raised by direct mail campaigns, proposal writing, Adopt-A-School partnerships, or cake sales. Colleges, museums, and community agencies have used foundations for years to supplement limited tax revenues.[32]

After Proposition 13, foundations became a serious interest to California school districts. Laguna Beach had established a foundation in 1969 to raise money for "nonbudgeted frills" but it soon died out. It was revived after Proposition 13; and not just for frills.[33] The concept is growing. A 1982 survey found 66 California districts having or planning educational foundations. A year and a half later, in fall 1983, that number had reached 211.[34] The movement is national. In 1983, the Ford Foundation estabished the Public Education Fund (PEF) in Pittsburgh to provide seed money and technical assistance to new education foundations across the country.

The educational foundation offers some unique features as a fundraising mechanism. A foundation is independent of the district it serves and has its own board of directors, although it usually turns the money raised over to the schools for allocation. The foundation is formally incorporated as a charitable trust or nonprofit corporation[35] which has filed with the IRS and state tax board for tax exempt status. This allows it to apply for a third class nonprofit mailing permit[36] and, most importantly, to provide donors with maximum tax deductions, as an incentive to give.[37]

Making the foundation a separate organization is time consuming, rather complicated, and requires the expense of hiring attorneys. Foundation personnel must fulfill corporate responsibilities under law, such as holding regular meetings and keeping minutes.[38] Although most foundations are run by volunteers, professional staff may be needed. Because of these complications and expenses, establishing a foundation is a serious undertaking and should be carefully planned. (For implementation guidelines, with special consideration to legal requirements in California, please see Kathy Clay and Others, Public School Foundations: Their Organization and Operation.)

Yet foundations are credited with several advantages, beyond the considerable one of tax deductions to donors. The separation of foundation from district can provide increased credibility in fundraising; a separation of funds to ward off possible criticisms; an ongoing structure and long-term objectives for fundraising; a focus for community involvement and investment in the schools that goes far beyond the PTA; a structure for volunteer efforts; a way for community members to work directly to improve the quality of local education, thus returning some local control to the schools; and quick action--the ability to raise and allocate money as local needs arise--something that state taxes can never do.[39]

When a donation campaign is well-done it is a powerful tool to increase community awareness of the school's services and needs. Speaking of the Allegheny Conference Education Fund in Pittsburgh, PEF director David Bergholz said, "If you evaluate what the fund has done for Pittsburgh, it's clear that it has put the public schools on the agenda of the town. People are now interested in the issue."[40]

As money raisers, foundations seem to work. From 1979-1983, California school districts with foundations raised a total of $8 million, compared to $5.6 million raised in the many more districts without foundations.[41] SchoolPower (Laguna Beach's foundation) and the San Francisco Education Fund are two of the best known foundations in California, but success stories exist elsewhere. In 1982, Piedmont raised $500,000 (eight percent of the school system's budget) through its foundation--almost all in the form of individual donations.[42] Hillsborough (like Piedmont, a wealthy suburb of San Francisco) raises about ten percent of its district funds through parent, community, and special gifts campaigns.[43]

It is stories of affluent districts like these that draw the major charge against educational foundations: that they are designed to subvert the equalization of funding across rich and poor districts that is the purpose of Serrano v. Priest and California state legislation. These accusations have not, however, let to legal challenges to foundations.[44] To determine if foundations are, indeed, the province of wealthy districts, the Association of California School Administrators analyzed responses from a 1983 survey. Of 106 foundation-using California districts, they classified 29 as high wealth, 29 as middle income, 15 as low wealth, and 33 as mixed. They classified the communities as: 11 urban, 18 rural, 61 suburban, and 16 mixed.[45]

It seems that all types of California districts are trying out the education foundation as a fundraising mechanism to supplement tight budgets. Apparently they find adequate returns in money and community awareness to warrant the serious planning and extra work the separate nonprofit corporation requires.

For Further Information:

Clay, Katherine and Others. Public School Foundations: Their Organization and Operation. Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service, 1985.

Neill, George. The Local Education Foundation: A New Way to Raise Money for the Schools. NASSP Special Report. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1983. ERIC Document ED 234 482.

## Property Management

Thanks to declining enrollment, many school districts have surplus property to lease or sell. California districts are restricted by many regulations about property disposal and the use of the resulting income.[46] But if a decision is made to try generate funds this way, the Cambridge, Massachusetts, schools offer a model for aggressive "physical asset management" that brings in marketing concepts to help maximize profits.[47]

After reviewing applicable laws, Cambridge inventoried its unused and underused facilities, identified times they could be used (after school, holidays, some even during school hours), estimated income, marketed the properties, and prepared guidelines for renters. Thus empty schools are rented for office space and early education centers, kitchens are rented on weekends and holidays to caterers, swimming pools are rented to private swim clubs and sports events. Garages, buses, theaters, and carpentry shops also fall into this marketable category.

Even where laws and regulations will allow this system, there are problems to consider in advance: inconvenience (what if school people need or want the rented property, for example, the pool to practice for a swim meet?); property damage or personal injury; theft; unusual traffic or noise that disturbs neighbors; parking problems; liquor use; conflicts of interest. Cambridge has found that a "comprehensive, aggressive, and

supported" physical asset management program takes a great deal of time and commitment, but the $125,000 cited in their article's title may still tempt some educators.

For Further Information:

Brown, Oliver. "Aggressive Asset Management Is Earning Our Schools $125,000 in New Money." The American School Board Journal, April 1983, pp.42-45.

## Gifts Catalogs

As explained in an article by Eleanor Boba,[48] "gifts catalogs" or "wishbooks" are a new technique cities and recreation departments are using to raise money and donations. It is one some schools might wish to try.

Gifts catalogs allow cities and organizations to be "up front" about what they want the community to contribute, whether it be a park bench, a golf course, sponsorship of child care, park maintenance, or a fire engine. Catalogs (or portfolios, which are easier to update as prices and needs change) are attractive, eye-catching presentations with price taxes attached to each item and the tax deductible nature of donations firmly highlighted. Along with tax deductibility, catalogs frankly appeal to donors' sense of civic pride and preference for the tangible (one can point to a park bench one gave, but not to a contribution to the city's general fund). Donors are given special recognition through plaques and ceremonies.

A catalog impresses people with the full range of services the city or organization offers. It can make concrete the extent of a financial crisis and appeal to citizens' generosity. It helps to systematize private donations and to avoid "white elephants," since needed items are clearly spelled out.

But the effectiveness of gifts catalogs is not yet clear. They are fairly new and function as parts of diverse programs, so their cost effectiveness is difficult to isolate. They seem to work best as part of a fundraising drive; they are no substitute for personal contacts.[49] Boba stresses that, like all fund raising efforts, catalogs are time-consuming and the rewards are distant. It is easy to get discouraged if initial results are poor.[50]

For Further Information

Boba, Eleanor. "Cataloging Urban Needs: Gift Catalogs Encourage Private Giving to Cities." The Grantsmanship Center News, January/February 1984, pp.16-20.

## Summary

Since the 1970s, public schools have turned to private individuals and organizations to supplement the public funding cut by inflation, recession, declining enrollment, and tax revolts. A number of fundraising methods have been described in this paper. While all have their special attractions or defects, most share these same general features:

- o They are long-term efforts requiring time and commitment from school staff and volunteers.
- o They are a way to save, restore, or add local programs. The community can express its desires for local schooling and its support through its contributions.
- o The fundraising effort seeks personal involvement as well as money. It can draw non-parents and business into direct concern for and contact with the public schools.

- o A successful campaign or partnership promotes pride. People can see their own efforts and dollars accomplishing something real, whether it's new band uniforms or a child catching up through tutoring.
- o A successful, well-planned campaign can impress citizens and business persons with the talents of educators and students.

But drawbacks and problems do exist:

- o A district has limited human talents and time with which to work and a finite community from which to draw funds. Before committing to a fundraising campaign, district leadership needs to consider many questions: Do we have the staff, with the time and the talent, to do this well? Can our community supply the money we need? Will we be competing with neighboring districts' fund drives?
- o Private fundraising is seen by some as a perversion of equal educational opportunity--an attempt by rich parents to subvert funding equality.
- o Private fundraising cannot replace an adequate system of public school finance. If it becomes too popular, it might deflect energy from state school finance reform.
- o In California, and perhaps in other states, there are many legal restrictions on how schools can raise and allocate local monies.
- o If school financial needs are not clearly and cogently explained, citizens may react badly to money appeals, feeling that schools have no right to ask for "handouts" when they're already supported by taxes. Even good civic awareness may falter. A number of California education foundations noted a drop in support after SB 813 passed. Apparently, citizens felt that the new state law gave schools all the money they would need.[51]

- o Increased community and business involvement may lead to attempts at control or coersion. A private donor might feel justified in telling the school board how his or her money is to be spent.
- o Fraud is rarely reported but not unknown. In 1979, serious financial mismanagement caused the Dallas school board to close down and eventually sue its foundation.[52]
- o A bungled campaign can reinforce the stereotype of schools as inept, mismanaged institutions.

Private fundraising is a growing activity of public schools today. Its watchwords seem to be careful planning, clear objectives, and human involvement in terms of energy, not just dollars. "Fundraising's number one axiom is that people do not give to causes, they give to people with causes they are willing to support."[53]

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[3]California School Law Digest, May 1984, p. 33.

[4]Judith S. Shoemaker, Emerging Role of Educational Foundations in Financing Education (1983), ERIC Document ED 242 078, p. 1.

[5]Thomas W. Allen and K. Scott Hughes, Fund Raising in California School Districts. A Discussion Paper (Sacramento, CA: Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Company, 1982), ERIC Document 227 599, p. 7.

[6]Allen and Hughes, p. 1-2.

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[8]Peach and Reddick, p. 5.

[9]Katherine Clay and Others, Public School Foundations: Their Organization and Operation (Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service, 1985), pp. 49, 52.

[10]Clay and Others, p. 44.

[11]"PTA Thrift Shop Earns Big Money for Carrboro-Chapel Hill Schools," Nation's Schools Report, January 21,1985, p. 6.

[12]Ron Moorhead, "Fundraising: The All-Hands-Aboard Venture," THRUST for Educational Leadership, January 1984, pp. 15-16.

[13]Peach and Reddick, p. 3.

[14]Dale Mann, All That Glitters: Public School/Private Sector Interaction in Twenty-Three U. S. Cities (1984), ERIC Documente ED 249 605, p. 7.

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[16]George Neill, The Local Education Foundation: A New Way to Raise Money for Schools. NASSP Special Report. (Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1983), ERIC Document ED 234 482, p. 6.

[17]Mann, p. 1.

[18]Mann, p. 31.

[19]Mann, pp. 2, 29, 32, 37.

[20]Mann, pp. 3-6, 41.

[21]"Partnerships in Education," Journal of Educational Public Relations, September 1984, p. 15.

[22]"Partnerships in Education," p. 17.

[23]Mann, p. 22.

[24]Hank Weiss, "IECC: Umbrella for Partnerships," California School Boards, October/November 1983, pp. 9-11.

[25]Gerald Foster, "Los Angeles Chamber Fosters Partnerships," California School Boards, October/November 1983, pp. 27-29.

[26]Kathleen McCormick, "Those Tried-and-True Alliances Have Paid Off for Public Schools," The American School Board Journal, October 1984, p. 24-25.

[27]Elinor Hart, Ed., Blueprint for Partnership: A Process Guide for Organizing Adopt-A-School Programs (Washington, D.C.: Prometheans, Inc., 1981), ERIC Document ED 204 428, p. 6.

[28]McCormick, p. 25-26.

[29]Hart, p. 8.

[30]McCormick, p. 25.

[31]McCormick, p. 25-26.

[32]Chris Conrad, "The ABC's of Educational Foundations," Grantsmanship Center News, January/February 1984, p. 10.

[33]Conrad, p. 10.

[34]Clay and Others, p. 2.

[35]Allen and Hughes, p. 3.

[36]Clay and Others, p. 36.

[37]Allen and Hughes, p. 4.

[38]Clay and Others, p. 28.

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[44]Shoemaker, p. 9.

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[46]California Coalition for Fair School Finance, pp. 30-31.

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[48]Eleanor Boba, "Cataloging Urban Needs: Gift Catalogs Encourage Private Giving to Cities," The Grantsmanship Center News, January/February 1984, pp. 16-20.

[49]Boba, p. 18.

[50]Boba, p. 17.

[51]Conrad, p. 11.

[52]Cramer, p. 37.

[53]Clay and Others, p. 6.

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